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On the topography of H. C. Andersen's travelogue I Spanien

Frederike Felcht*

Even in Africa I seem
To be still near my father-land.¹

This essay will explore how space is represented in Hans Christian Andersen's *I Spanien*, a travelogue that was published in 1863. It begins at the French border and continues through Spain via Gibraltar, down to Morocco, and from there back to Spain via another route. The text is characterized by precise observations, numerous poems, and passages of lyrical prose. The descriptions of architecture and infrastructures, landscapes and cities are enriched with intertextual references, historical background information, and the emotions of the first-person narrator. This results in a complex image of the spaces described, which I will analyze here with the help of David Harvey's Marxist cultural geography and Edward Said's postcolonial theory. The emphasis of this inquiry will be on the relationship between Denmark, Spain, and Africa in the topography of *I Spanien*.

* Translated from German by Ingo Maerker and Michelle Miles.

¹ Andersen, Hans Christian, *In Spain and A Visit to Portugal*, New York, Hurd and Houghton, 1870, p. 134. Original quote: "Selv i Afrika jeg synes, / jeg er nær mit Fædreland." Andersen, Hans Christian, *Rejseskildringer II 1851-1872, H. C. Andersens samlede værker*. Edited by Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab. Vol. 15, Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 2006, p. 335.

Andersen as a topographer? Theoretical background

In his introduction to Hans Christian Andersen's travel accounts, Klaus Peter Mortensen refers to a review of *I Sverrig* (1851) [*In Sweden*] written at the time of its publication, which stated that one should not expect to find in this account any actual information about Sweden: In the infinite sea of the author's imagination, one searches in vain for a drop of reality. In response to this criticism, Mortensen makes the following legitimate comment:

The reviewer's concept of reality is, like his concept of genre, extremely limited. H. C. Andersen is neither a topographer nor a cultural geographer, and the world is more than just the sum of factual commentaries.²

This having been said, could a conceivable way of understanding topography or cultural geography exist to which Andersen's travel accounts contribute? After all, they do offer descriptions of places, which is one way of translating topographies. Andersen does not work with the instruments of the geodesist or the cartographer, unlike a true topographer. Nonetheless, these instruments capture only a small part of what space is.

In his lecture *Space as a Key Word* the cultural geographer David Harvey demonstrates that many possibilities of understanding space exist. Harvey begins by distinguishing between three categories of space. The space of the cartographer is the measurable *absolute space* that can be fixed and planned. We also have the *relative space* of objects that refer to each other, whose comprehension is dependent on the referential frame of the viewer and the criteria for interrelating objects to one another. This concept of space can be used to create thematic maps, such as the London tube map, for example. Finally, *relational space* focuses on the processes that generate space. On this level, each object contains and represents, within itself, relations to other objects without which it would not exist.

² Andersen, Hans Christian: *Rejseskildringer I. 1826-1842. H. C. Andersens samlede værker*. Edited by Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab. Bd. 14, Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2006, p. 37, translation by Michelle Miles and Ingo Maerker. Original quote: "Anmelderens virkelighedsbegreb er lige som hans genrebegreb umådeligt indskrænket. H. C. Andersen er jo hverken topograf eller kulturgeograf, og verden er mere end summen af realia."

Harvey, who is referring here to Cassirer and Lefebvre, also distinguishes between *material space / experienced space, representations of space / conceptualized space* and *spaces of representations / lived space*. While material space can be touched and felt, representations of space signify how this space is mentally conceived and represented, and the spaces of representation encompass the lived space of perceptions, imagination, emotions, and meanings that shape our daily lives. These categories create a matrix of three times three components that can be assembled in complex scenarios.³

Harvey emphasizes that space can rarely be interpreted independently of time and the respective viewer. Space is often comprehended through movement, affective cathexis and its relation to history and memories. This is often achieved – and *Space as a Key Word* is no exception – by means of language.

According to Harvey, considering the different facets of space opens up possibilities of criticism because conflicts of interest, for instance, or contradictory concepts of space become more easily recognizable, as demonstrated in the example of economic processes. Representations of space require an analysis that does justice to their complexity. Harvey's concepts, which distinguish between different forms of representing space, allow us to describe the intertwining and tension between different levels.

I Spanien certainly exhibits the tension-filled complexity that Harvey describes. Klaus Müller-Wille points out how the detailed description of the materiality of the Alhambra and especially its decorative arabesques become entangled within the first-person narrator's emotions of spatial disorientation, which Müller-Wille associates with the perception of Spain as a difficult to locate border or interspace leading to Africa.⁴ We can apply Harvey's terminology to argue that Müller-Wille is here analyzing the relationship between material, conceptualized, and experienced space.

³ See Harvey, David, "Space as a key word", David Harvey, *Spaces of neoliberalization: towards a theory of uneven geographical development*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005, p. 93-115, here: p. 93-108.

⁴ See Müller-Wille, Klaus, "Hispanomanie – Dänische Spanienreisen und die Konzeption einer anderen Moderne", in Seiler, Thomas and Strauss, Frithjof (Ed.), *Skandinavisch-ibero(amerika)nische Kulturkontakte (=Beiträge zur Nordischen Philologie)*, Basel/Tübingen, A. Francke (publication pending), [8f.]

Harvey's Marxist approach is also suitable here because the context of economic exploitation plays an important role in Andersen's depictions of Africa. However, before I turn to the travelogue, I would first like to expand on this approach.

Spatial concepts are closely tied to power relations. With regard to representations of Africa, it can be useful to take postcolonial positions into account because the perception of Africa in European literature in the nineteenth century was often subject to colonial patterns. Edward Said demonstrates in *Orientalism* how reductive and unifying European and North American representations of the so-called Orient have been (and often still are). This observation also applies to other represented and dominated spaces. Reduction makes it easier for the European and North American viewer to establish a position of power over the Other. The one-sidedness of their perspective is problematic. Often Western representations of the Orient are confirmations of the self through the construction of the Other.⁵

The same is true for Andersen's representations of Africa in *I Spanien*, which can also be interpreted as a reduction, according to Said's sense of the word: The narrator only visits a miniscule part of the continent, and yet he continues to talk about Africa as a whole. Unlike *Orientalism*, however, *I Spanien* is not based on a purely dichotomous, imaginary geography, as can be seen in the accentuated intertwinings and overlappings in the text. In this essay, I will investigate to what extent the text confirms or refutes Eurocentric stereotypes in the perception of the Other.

From the perspective of literary criticism, we should pay attention to the fact that, as a travelogue, *I Spanien* also always inscribes itself in an intertextual space, as Klaus Müller-Wille stresses in his article on Danes traveling to Spain.⁶ I will therefore place special emphasis here on the intertextuality of the representations of space.

⁵ See Said, Edward, *Orientalism. 25th Anniversary Edition*, New York, Vintage Books, 2004, p. 31-73. For more on the effect of these mechanisms on the relations between Africa and Scandinavia, see Körber, Lill-Ann and Löbel, Katarina, "'Afrika' und 'der Norden'. Konzeptualisierungen und Verschränkungen zweier Regionen", *Acta Germanica / German Studies in Africa* 37 (2009), p. 17-33.

⁶ See Müller-Wille, *op.cit.*, p. [1]. For more on the intertextuality of travelogs, see Pfister, Manfred: "Intertextuelles Reisen, oder: Der Reisebericht als Intertext", in Foltinek, Herbert *et al.* (Ed.), *Tales and "their telling difference". Festschrift für Franz K. Stanzel*,

Spaces of history / Histories of space: Architecture

Buildings are some of the smallest elements in the topography of *I Spanien*. They are part of material space, and the first-person narrator encounters them in his immediate environment, where they are closely inspected, especially the Moorish architecture.⁷ In these representations, architecture brings together geographies and stories. The buildings unite different times and spaces because the interweaving of Moorish and Spanish history is conserved in them and thereby continued. These spaces filled with history are hybrids in a temporal as well as spatial sense because of their similarity to far away places like Morocco.⁸

This hybridity is directly inscribed in material space and is enriched on the level of textual representation by historical background knowledge, legends, and stories. The Moorish architecture combines the past of the Moors with the story of their expulsion. The counterparts of the Moorish ruins are the empty Christian monasteries that fell victim to Spanish uprisings.⁹ In this way, Christian and Muslim history is thus paralleled, although Christian history does not represent the “predecessor” of Muslim history here, as is most often the case in Western historiography.¹⁰

The idea of constant progress under Western leadership that was widespread in the nineteenth century is thus partly refuted in the descriptions of Moorish architecture. As a result, the narrator occasionally opposes more recent tamperings with Moorish architecture

Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag C. Winter 1993, p. 109-132. A concise overview of the literature that Andersen read to prepare for the journey and of the history of Danish travelogs is presented by Henrik Schovsbo in his epilogue to *I Spanien*: Schovsbo, Henrik, “Efterskrift”, in Andersen, Hans Christian, *I Spanien*. Edited by Erik Dal. Copenhagen, Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab / Valby, Borgen, 2004, p. 223-248, here p. 226, 230-239.

⁷ See for example Andersen, Rejseskildringer II, *op. cit.*, p. 229, 263, 277-279, 293-296, 313-316. See also Müller-Wille, *op. cit.*, p. [8f.]

⁸ Despite the problematic history of the term, I use hybridity here to describe the mutual penetration of different spaces subject to an imbalance of power, since this term has gained acceptance in this context. See Griem, Julika: “Hybridität”, in Nünning, Ansgar (Ed.), *Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie*, 4th ed., Stuttgart / Weimar, J.B. Metzler, 2008, p. 297-298.

⁹ See for example Andersen, Rejseskildringer II, *op. cit.*, p. 314, 372.

¹⁰ For more on the idea of the West’s position as a precursor, see Chakrabarty, Dipesh, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton / Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 3-46.

because he sees these as deformations, thus pointing out the decline of Cordoba after the Moorish era when art and science were in full bloom.¹¹

Architecturally, Spain is a hybrid space of the bloom of Moorish art, medieval structures such as streets organized according to trades in Barcelona, and examples of outlandishness, such as a replica of the House of Pilate built in medieval times. There are also modern buildings, like the theater in Barcelona, whose director's box is connected to the stage by a telegraph line and whose splendor outshines even the theater in Paris.¹² This architecture of overlapping historical developments and geographical regions pluralizes the positioning of the viewer and thus goes beyond cartographical localization in absolute space.

Cross-fading: Landscapes

I was in a foreign land, yet I felt myself at home: it was the sea which caused that home feeling – the glorious sea! It rolled up from the coast of Africa with its swelling waves, like the German Ocean on the coast of Jutland, its bluish-green waves reminding me of a summer evening under the rocks of Möen.¹³

The landscape images used to describe Spain in this passage, i.e. the coast of Jutland and the rocks of Möen, had become nationally significant for Denmark's image in the nineteenth century. Such an overlapping of Denmark's national landscape and Spain can be found on numerous occasions, for example in the image of the flat land with the white-washed cottages thatched with straw.¹⁴ In this way, the text refers to a cartographical and literary construction of Denmark as a

¹¹ See Andersen, *Rejseskildringer II*, *op. cit.*, p. 294-296, 357, 370f.

¹² See *ibid.*, p. 230, 362, 232.

¹³ Andersen, In Spain, *op.cit.*, p. 9. The translation of "that home feeling" for "det Hjemlige" weakens the actual overlaying of spaces in the text by placing them inside the narrator. Original quote: "Jeg var i fremmed Land, og følte mig dog saa hjemlig, det var Havet, som bragte det Hjemlige, det herlige Hav! det rullede her mod mig fra *Afrikas* Kyst med Bølgeslag, som Vesterhavet ved *Jyllands* Kyst; den vatrede blaagrønne Flade kjendte jeg igjen fra en Sommeraften under *Møens* Klint." Andersen, *Rejseskildringer II*, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

¹⁴ See Andersen, *Rejseskildringer II*, *op. cit.*, p. 244. The landscape around Aranjuez has the character of a Danish park landscape. See *ibid*, p. 393. Spain occasionally reminds the narrator of Italy as well. See *ibid.*, p. 317, 322, 393.

nation, as elaborated by Wolfgang Behschnitt,¹⁵ while also transferring its elements outside the country's borders and thus transcending the ostensive rootedness of these stereotypes.

This dislocates and opens up the spatial concept of the nation state, which was of outmost importance in the nineteenth century. In *I Spanien* the connection on the level of absolute space between the nation state and its territory acts as a landscape image that is turned into a deterritorialized parameter of comparison, thereby evoking emotions that create a relational space of home in many places. The claim of exclusiveness that is connected to national landscapes and which often goes hand in hand with attempts to dominate space is here replaced by a non-exclusive idea of mutually penetrating spaces.

The home-like character of Spain is also stressed on the intertextual level. The text takes up a motif from Andersen's autobiography: His first visit to Spain occurs on the same date when he arrived in Copenhagen and Italy before. The spatial changes are enacted as the narrator's passage into a new stage of life, a second birth.¹⁶

The travel book ends in a historical space consisting of legends and historical intertexts woven together, where Spain and Denmark are crossfaded in the remembrance of the Spanish in Denmark and the battle of the Danish national hero Holger Danske against the Moors in Spain.¹⁷ In this way, solidarity between the countries is established in the representational space that is founded on mutual historical connections.

In the passage above, however, Spain is also presented as closely linked to Africa. From the beginning, the travel account is oriented toward Africa, and a visit to Africa in the chapter *Et Besøg i Afrika* [A

¹⁵ See Behschnitt, Wolfgang, *Wanderungen mit der Wünschelrute. Landesbeschreibende Literatur und die vorgestellte Geographie Deutschlands und Dänemarks im 19. Jahrhundert*. Würzburg, Ergon, 2006, p. 277-340.

¹⁶ See Andersen, Rejseskildringer II, *op. cit.*, p. 226, 562; Andersen, Hans Christian, *Selvbiografier I + II. H. C. Andersens samlede værker. Edited by Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab*, vol. 16-17, Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 2007, here vol. 16, p. 235, vol. 17, p. 127. For more on the connection between "birthdays" and the changes in space in Andersen, see also Glienke, Bernhard, "Andersen in den Städten oder Die Entdeckung der Schnelligkeit", in Baumgartner, Walter and Fix, Hans (ed.), *Arbeiten zur Skandinavistik. XII. Arbeitstagung der deutschsprachigen Skandinavistik 16.-23. September 1995 in Greifswald*, Vienna, Fassbaender, 1996, p. 36-52, here p. 39f.

¹⁷ See Andersen, Rejseskildringer II, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

Visit to Africa] is described as the highpoint of the journey.¹⁸ Spain's landscape not only contains elements of Denmark, but also the Orient and Africa: Oriental palm gardens, African heat befitting the hot blood of a poet, and illuminated cities, like those in *Arabian Nights*.¹⁹ It thereby represents a space that forms a connection to Africa.²⁰

In the end, Denmark and Africa are also directly connected. The African coast near Tangier is flatter and with green hills "not unlike those on the northern coast of Zealand."²¹ The sea on the coast of Africa reminds him of Denmark: "The billows of the ocean bring / Sounds from the distant Danish strand. / Even in Africa I seem / To be still near my father-land."²²

Denmark is, of course, an obvious frame of reference for descriptions of landscapes in the book because Andersen's Danish readers know it well. But these descriptions also create a kind of moveable home that can be encountered anywhere. The localization of the narrator in an orderly, cartographically comprehensible travel route develops a tense relation with the experience of mutually inclusive spaces.

Hierarchy of places: Spain between center and periphery

The comparisons of different national landscapes, which result in overlappings and closeness dissolve the spatial order of absolute space into experienced common ground and thus reveal themselves to be counterpoints to exclusive, nationalistic concepts of space. Other comparisons point to the idea of stages in the spread of civilization (in terms of technology, economy, and politics) and thus implicitly confirm hierarchical spatial orders. The more civilized a space is, the closer it

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 348.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 258, 268f., 312, 301, 307.

²⁰ See Müller-Wille, *op.cit.*, p. [3].

²¹ Andersen, In Spain, *op.cit.*, p. 129. Original quote: "ikke ulig Sjællands nordlige Kyst". Andersen, *Rejseskildringer II*, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

²² Andersen, In Spain, *op.cit.*, p. 134. Original quote: "Havets Brænding har en Susen, / Toner fra den danske Strand; / Selv i Afrika jeg synes, / jeg er nær mit Fædreland." Andersen, *Rejseskildringer II*, *op. cit.*, p. 335. In another passage (p. 317) it is the cold of winter that connects both countries.

comes to the modern centers. This hierarchy is based on the idea of progress.

The fact that in *I Spanien* Africa initially seems to take an extremely peripheral position within this spatial order falls in line with a Eurocentric understanding of history, in which all non-Western countries are behind in the scale of historic progress.²³ The representation of Africa, however, primarily demonstrates the continent's importance for a colonially structured world economy, which I will demonstrate in the next section. But first, I will turn once more to Spain.

While Spain inhabits different positions within the imaginary geography of regions which have been developed for traveling, it remains generally located on the periphery: The destination of the journey is "the beautiful, but hitherto seldom visited, Spain".²⁴ Its peripheral position is also expressed by its relatively recent and poor integration into the international transport and communication networks²⁵ and also by the still incomplete modernization of the Spanish police system that only recently made safe traveling possible.²⁶ Throughout the entire travel book, there is tension between the touristically developed part of the country and the still remote areas.²⁷ Nearness to the center is marked by comparisons with cities like Paris, which stands for shops and fashion and public living on boulevards and in cafés.²⁸ If Barcelona is compared to Paris, then it achieves what Bernhard Glienke would call a "Weltstadtniveau" – a cosmopolitan city standard.²⁹ Cities of the center are also important as travel destinations.

This form of representing the world is also made possible through the growing spread of travel guides and pictures, which is an indication

²³ See Chakrabarty, *op. cit.*, p. 3-46.

²⁴ Andersen, In Spain, *op.cit.*, p. 1. Original quote: "det skønne, endnu lidet besøgte Spanien". Andersen, Rejseskildringer II, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

²⁵ A letter from Andersen that was published in *Dagbladet* is especially remarkable in this context. See *ibid.*, p. 555, see also p. 225, 327, 381, 408. When visiting Cartagena and Cadiz, on the other hand, Spain seems to be more part of a news network, see *Ibid.*, p. 272, 351. For more on the development of the Spanish rail network, see Hachtmann, Rüdiger, *Tourismus-Geschichte*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007, p. 73f.

²⁶ See Andersen, Rejseskildringer II, *op. cit.*, p. 223, 226, 411. Memories of dangers past serve to dramatize the travelog. See *ibid.*, p. 256, 290, 302f., 374f.

²⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 251, 262, 275, 378, 394.

²⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 228f., 363, 383f.

²⁹ Glienke, *op. cit.*, p. 44. See also Müller-Wille, *op.cit.*, p. [3].

of the emerging tourism in the nineteenth century. Andersen could thus be sure that his comparisons would be understood by his readers.³⁰

Müller-Wille has identified parallels in the sometimes peripheral position of both Spain and Denmark and stresses that, in the descriptions of Spain,

those tensions and disruptions that characterized contemporary Spain and Denmark as societies that are late in their modernization are highlighted.

The stylistic heterogeneity of the travel account, in which romanticism and modernity are contrasted, is, for Müller-Wille, closely connected to the “interest in the fractured culture of Spain (or rather, a culture in upheaval)”.³¹ In other words, there is a correspondence between the hybridity of the countries visited and the heterogenous forms of their representation.

Africa and the network of things

We have focused on how African and Danish elements have penetrated Spain in the text. By leaving its mark on Spain, Africa reaches beyond its geographical borders, but also within these we can identify a mutual penetration of Africa and Europe.

Africa seems to initially represent the outside of the space of civilization. Moroccan Jews greet the arriving travelers like looters, and the narrator sees sleepy Moors and naked boys yelling. He is accompanied by “a score of half-naked barbarians” to his hotel: “Were we not on the coast of the barbarians, in the country from which, in olden times, pirates went forth, as they did from Tunis, Algiers, and

³⁰ For more on the development of tourism, see Andersen, Hans Christian: “Hans Christian Andersen Tourist?”, in de Mylius, Johan *et al.*, *Hans Christian Andersen. Between Children’s Literature and Adult Literature*. Odense, University Press of Southern Denmark, 2007, p.149-165, here 151ff.; Hachtmann, *op. cit.*, especially p. 9-17, 48-98. For more on the mediated shaping of perception on journeys, see Löfgren, Orvar, *On Holiday. A History of Vacationing*. Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1999, p. 14-21, 41-48, 91-100.

³¹ “die Spannungen und Brüche in den Vordergrund gestellt werden, die das damalige Spanien wie das damalige Dänemark als spät modernisierte Gesellschaften auszeichnen.” / “Interesse für die gebrochene Kultur Spaniens (beziehungsweise für eine Kultur im Umbruch)” Müller-Wille, *op.cit.*, p. [7].

Tripoli, for the purposes of rapine and murder?”³² Still, the fact that he places the barbarians in the past already weakens the dichotomist world view of a civilized Europe as opposed to an uncivilized Africa. In the course of the story the inhabitants of Morocco are revealed to be not at all the barbarians the narrator had expected them and perceived them to be initially.

“Et Besøg i Afrika” demonstrates more than anything just how much Africa is integrated into global commodity networks. It evokes empathy for the victims of exploitation within these networks. Things therefore play an important role as the visible results of these contexts.

The narrator presents his readers with an ensemble of things from all over the world which have collected in Africa. For instance, the daughters of the narrator’s host, Sir Drummond Hay, are familiar with Andersen’s fairy tales in translation, and the visitor therefore leaves them an inscribed edition from Geneva. The Hay residence also houses presents from the emperor of Morocco such as tiger skins, Moorish sabers, and precious saddles, in addition to an extensive library, paintings, and copper engravings with Danish motifs, presents from the Swedish and Danish kings, and window blinds manufactured in Copenhagen with painted views of Fredriksborg, Fredriksberg, and Rosenborg: “I might have fancied myself in a Danish room – in Denmark – and yet I was in another quarter of the globe.”³³ The transnational character of the interior decoration is crowned with the English comfort of a fireplace.³⁴ The things not only bring together contemporary life in Africa, but also “remote locales and memories of the past,”³⁵ which is a typical function of interior decoration, according to Walter Benjamin. They thereby generate a hybrid space that is the result of an intensive process of exchange.

³² Andersen, In Spain, *op.cit.*, p. 131. Original quote: “en Snees halvnøgne Barbarer”; “vare vi ikke ogsaa paa Barbarenernes Kyst, i Landet hvorfra i gammel Tid Sørøverne gik ud, som fra *Tunis, Algier og Tripolis*, for at øve Rov og Drab.” Andersen, *Rejseskildringer II*, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

³³ Andersen, In Spain, *op.cit.*, p. 139. Original quote: “jeg maatte troe mig i en dansk Stue, i det danske Land og var dog i en anden Verdensdeel.” Andersen, *Rejseskildringer II*, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

³⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 340.

³⁵ Benjamin, Walter, *The Arcades Project*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 19.

Shortly after this description of the interior, the narrator recounts a later talk with a Turkish souvenir merchant in Paris, who sells the same souvenirs as the merchants in Tangier. The souvenir merchant tells the narrator that the souvenirs are produced at low cost in Paris and then sent to Africa, where they are sold as African souvenirs.³⁶ This conversation is proof that Africa is not the wilderness the narrator thought he had found, but is rather part of a global chain of commodities.

Capitalism's success is based on the ability to forget where its products actually come from. This is already true for the imported souvenirs. In this case, forgetting is harmless; they even keep their sentimental value for the narrator because they were at least bought in Africa.³⁷ "Et Besøg i Afrika" also demonstrates the reverse side of this forgetting, however, as the basis for the exploitative character of the global production of commodities.

In one instance, the narrator tells the story of his cigar and thereby connects the enjoyment of a luxury product with the cruelties of its production which preceded it. A young African princess, now a slave in Cuba, had wept while rolling this cigar. A single tear, filled with her childhood memories, longing, and sorrow, fell onto the leaf. "The leaf was rolled up, – the brown mummy was called a good cigar."³⁸ From that point on, the cigar carries within it the longing and sorrow of she who produced it, conserved like a mummy, while the consumer is meant only to recognize in it a good cigar. When the cigar is lit in Africa, it sets the spirit free that has entered it through the tear drop: "It freed itself, it raised itself in its father-land, and flew over the Atlas Mountains to the unknown inner region. The soul in the tear was at liberty in thought's homeland!"³⁹ In this passage, freedom is located beyond the contexts of consumption and production. The development of civilization, on the other hand, is turned into an ambivalent project that allows global exploitation at minimum, if it does not actually demand it. In I Spanien, Africa becomes entangled in contexts indicating that modernization,

³⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 341.

³⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 341.

³⁸ Andersen, In Spain, *op.cit.*, p. 137. Original quote: "Bladet rullede, – den brune Mumie kaldtes en god Cigar." Andersen, Rejseskildringer II, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

³⁹ Andersen, In Spain, *op.cit.*, p. 137. Original quote: "Den løste sig, den løftede sig i hendes Fædreland, svang sig over Atlasbjergene til det ubekjendte, indre Land. Sjælen i Taaren var fri i Tankens Hjemland!" Andersen, Rejseskildringer II, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

as a one-sided Western project, is stabilized by asymmetries and that the balancing of these asymmetries requires far more than the mere diffusion of technologies and commodities (as the idea of “catch-up” development suggests).

The cigar reappears in countless episodes in *I Spanien*; the Spanish smoke at all occasions. There is even a poem devoted to it.⁴⁰ Analogous to the idea of a world-encompassing chain of commodities, it winds through the entire text, always in new transformations. That this consistently present product receives the story of its origin in Africa, which is a story of abduction and exploitation, lends the image of Africa in *I Spanien* a remarkably critical dimension.

Conclusion: Beyond Africa

I Spanien presents Africa as a place whose importance reaches far beyond itself: As part of a European history that is preserved in architecture, as space that encloses other spaces in it and can even arouse feelings of home, as the place of origin of a world economy that is based on slavery, whose products return to their land. These things are objects of longing whose context of production must be forgotten in order for them to be enjoyed without hesitation. They can only fulfill this function with difficulty in the text, however, because it reveals their origins.

The text always regards Africa in new ways. It does not find the expected outside space of civilization. Instead, the representation of Africa as part of a worldwide, economic network indirectly suggests that its alleged backwardness in terms of civilization is merely a way of legitimizing its exploitation. Defining the periphery is already an act of domination.

I Spanien establishes a hybrid geography of mutual relations and thus opens a space for a different understanding of the relationship between Europe and Africa than was common in the nineteenth century. This topography of reciprocity is, in many respects, more precise than Andersen’s contemporaries were willing to admit.

⁴⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 355.